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"SWEET has affirmed ('Oldest English Texts,' p. 125) that the language of the inscription shows that it cannot well be later than the middle of the eighth century, and this position seems to me to be well taken (I would refer especially to the forms *rodi* and *ungket*). SOPHUS MÜLLER is inclined to fix the date of the Ruthwell Cross at about the year 1000 (*Aarbøger for nord. Oldkynd.* 1880, p. 338 ff.). I am not capable of forming an opinion concerning the archæological grounds on which he bases his judgment, but the language of the inscription seems to me decisive against so late a period. Apparently everything is in favor of assigning the same date to the Bewcastle Cross as to the Ruthwell Cross."

The opinion of SOPHUS MÜLLER is more fully reproduced on pp. 44-45 of BRENNER's translation: "But the Danish archæologist SOPHUS MÜLLER concludes, as he obligingly informs me, that the Ruthwell Cross must be posterior to the year 800, and in fact to the Carolingian Renaissance, on account of its decorative features. The free foliage and flower-work, and the dragons or monsters with fore-legs, wings and serpents' tails, induce him to believe that it could scarcely have been sculptured much before 1000 A. D."

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#### MATERIAM SUPERABAT OPUS.

OID, in his description of the Palace of the Sun, writes: "*Materiam superabat Opus.*" That is a good motto for Æsthetics. It means enough, and in expression is apt enough, for a handy rule. Take any work proffered as art and the test question is, Does the workmanship surpass the material? It is the workmanship, and not the material, that constitutes art. We flounder often in discriminating, in a dazzling mass of material, the workmanship. Splendid material can hide a multitude of the artist's faults.

'Paradise Lost' is a grand mass of fine material. We are so overwhelmed with the material as not to see clearly the workmanship. As a piece of work it lacks of being a piece of fine art. The noise is made about Satan's loss of heaven, and not about Man's

loss of Eden. The fall of Man is a mere incident to the fall of Satan; it occupies the place of an incident. Satan's fall is the gorgeous front of the edifice, while Man's fall is the hinder part. The theme of 'Paradise Lost' demands that the effect—the fall of Man—be made more prominent than the cause—the fall of Satan.

Suppose we compare MILTON's Satan with SHAKESPEARE's Iago. We are pleased with the *material* of Satan. There is not a lovable piece of material in Iago, yet we admire the *work*. Satan is a hero. Is Iago? Satan draws us by all that we cherish in the heroes of history. He is the chief of the many throned powers that led the embattled seraphim to war on the plains of heaven.

His "mighty stature" accords well with his position. Notice him as he moves towards the shore of the "oblivious pool" to arouse his faithful followers:

..... "his ponderous shield  
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round  
Behind him cast. The broad circumference  
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb  
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views  
At evening."

"His spear—to equal which the tallest pine,  
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast  
On some great admiral, were but a wand."

And when his faithful are gathered from the pool,

"He, above the rest  
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,  
Stood like a tower."

He looked upon

"Millions of spirits for his fault amerced  
Of heaven, and from eternal splendors flung  
For his revolt; yet faithful how they stood  
Their glory withered."

"He now prepared  
To speak: .....  
..... attention held them mute.  
Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,  
Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth; at last  
Words interwove with sighs find out their way."

That was heroism, too. He had the heart of a hero. Satan had a cause worthy of a hero, namely, "to regain those blissful seats." He had the following of a hero, too:

"Princes, Potentates,  
Warriors, the flower of heaven, ..  
..... powers  
Matchless, but with the Almighty."

With all he had the unconquerable will of a hero.

In making Satan fight to regain heaven, MILTON spoilt him for a devil. He is not a whit more diabolical than SHAKESPEARE'S Coriolanus! How out of keeping it is to have Satan undertake the easier enterprise of seducing the new race called Man, "less in power and excellence!"

After a long debate in the synod of the gods, Satan, self-appointed, heroically takes his solitary flight through hell, fights heroically with Death, then wings his way, heroically, through Chaos and old Night, and finally, brings heroically (?) to grief a pair of pigmy innocents!

One glance at Iago will be enough. He had not been deprived of the lieutenantcy which he was seeking. In his own estimation he was worthy the position, but with Othello Cassio was the man. He had no motive for his conduct except of his own diabolical hatching; yet how skilfully he brought the direst results to that happy pair! He was a devil!

After all is said, 'Paradise Lost' is intensely interesting. But suppose the workmanship surpassed the material!

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### THE NOMINATIVE ABSOLUTE IN ENGLISH.

Professor GILDERSLEEVE in his excellent 'Latin Grammar' (§ 409) says: "The Ablative Absolute may be translated by the English Objective Absolute, which is a close equivalent." Should the English equivalent of the ablative absolute be called the objective absolute? Here is an illustrative example, with its translations: "Xerxes regnante" (= Quum Xerxes regnaret), *Xerxes reigning*. *When Xerxes was reigning. In the reign of Xerxes.*

Is "Xerxes reigning" the English objective absolute, or "In the reign of Xerxes"? Not the latter, surely, for the preposition *in* does anything else but absolve the syntactical connection. In Latin, the ablative absolute absolves syntactical connection; in Greek, the genitive absolute; in English, the—what? the functional relations are never disturbed.

"When Xerxes was reigning" is syntacti-

cally connected with the main sentence, so also is "In the reign of Xerxes," but "Xerxes reigning" is not thus connected and therefore *absolute*. Is it objective absolute? It is nominative absolute.

To say that "Xerxes reigning" is objective absolute is to say that "Xerxes" is in the objective case. To say that "Xerxes" is objective is to admit a vital syntactical connection with the principal sentence, for "reigning" does not govern "Xerxes." When is a noun in the objective case? When it is object of an active transitive verb, or of a preposition. It is the syntactical connection, expressed or implied, that makes it the object. The mere omission of the governing word does not make it "absolute." Is it not a contradiction to say objective absolute?

A noun in the objective case is *governed*, but a noun in the nominative *governs*. The noun (*Haupt-wort*) in the nominative is pre-eminently, the 'head-word': the verb agrees with it and not it with the verb. The nominative, syntactically speaking, holds the reins, the effect of the verb and adjective on the noun is logical and not syntactical.

A noun in the objective case is ruled by something within the sentence, but a noun in the nominative—in principal or subordinate clause—is not so ruled. Take the clause "When Xerxes was reigning." Whence comes the demand for making it "Xerxes reigning"? From the higher rhetorical principle of condensation. Rhetoric asks "Xerxes" to let go "was reigning," which done, the syntactical connection made by the conjunctive adverb *when* is dissolved, and the nominative "Xerxes" absolved of its verb in a finite mode.

But is it nominative absolute? It is not objective, as has been argued. It is not possessive, nor dative. It must be nominative.

Is "Xerxes" in any case? Every noun performing a function in a sentence will have a case. In MEIKLEJOHN'S 'English Grammar' is this rule: "A Noun and an Adjective, or a Noun and a Participle, or a Noun and an Adjective Phrase,—not syntactically connected with any other word in the sentence,—are put in the Nominative Absolute."

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